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BUILDING PERMITS

A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE



**Building Department
3rd Floor, City Hall
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5**

**Office Hours:
Monday to Thursday
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

General Information: (905) 546-2720

BUILDING PERMITS

A Homeowner's Guide

If you are a homeowner and are planning home improvements, this guide will tell you when a building permit is required and what you need to know about applying for a building permit from the City of Hamilton.

What is a Building Permit?

A building permit gives you the legal authorization to start construction of a building project in accordance with approved drawings and specifications.

Building permits are issued by the Building Department and are reviewed for compliance with the Ontario Building Code, the Hamilton Zoning By-Law and other applicable provincial and municipal regulations.

Building permits are necessary to ensure that zoning requirements, fire and structural safety standards, and other building standards are met.

When are Building Permits Required?

In general, a building permit is required to erect, install, extend, alter or repair a building.

The following are examples of projects that require building permits:

- Construction of a new home.
- Addition of a carport, garage, porch or room(s) to an existing home.
- Construction or finishing of rooms in the basement or attic.

- Any structural work including alterations to interior partitions or the installation of new skylights, windows or doors.
- Addition of dormer(s).
- Enclosing a porch or deck.
- Addition of a deck to an existing home.
- Raising a house to provide a full basement.
- Constructing or installing detached accessory buildings such as a garage, shed, or playhouse larger than 108 square feet (10 square metres).
- Installation of fireplaces and other heating appliances including the replacement of furnaces and ductwork.
- Installation of central air conditioning.
- Installation of siding, brick veneer, or other exterior wall covering.
- Installation of insulation, air/vapour barrier and drywall.
- Replacing or installing new plumbing, including repair or installation of an on-site sewage system.
- Dampproofing or waterproofing foundation walls including installation of weeping tile.
- Installing a ramp or elevating device.

The following are examples of projects that may require a building permit:

- Repair or renovations.
- Replacement of windows. Note: A permit is not required if you are replacing windows that are the same size and same location.
- Re-shingling a roof.

If these lists do not include specifics of your project or you are not sure if a permit will be required, please review the details of the work with our Customer Service Representatives, prior to construction.

NOTE: Although a building permit may not be required, you must still comply with the requirements of the Hamilton Zoning By-Law.

Pools

A Building Permit is not required for the installation of a private residential swimming pool. However, the pool location, enclosure and equipment must conform to applicable municipal by-laws. Please see the City of Hamilton Building Department, "Swimming Pools: A Homeowner's Guide", available at the Building Department service counter for information on these requirements.

Demolition

If you propose to demolish any structure occupying an area greater than 108 square feet (10 square metres) or part of such a structure, you will require a Building Permit. Further information may be obtained from our Customer Service Representatives.

Sewage Systems

If you are installing or repairing an on-site sewage system, with a design capacity of 10,000 Litres per day or less, a permit is required from the Hamilton Building Department. For more information, please refer to "Sewage Systems: A Homeowner's Guide", available at the Building Department service counter.

Applying for a Building Permit

Applications

Applications for building permits are available at the Building Department service counter, located on the 3rd floor of City Hall, 71 Main Street West. If you would like a form mailed to you, please call our Department at 546-2720.

Plans

In most cases, with your application you will be required to submit detailed construction drawings and sufficient information for us to establish that your project complies with the applicable laws.

Two (2) copies of each of the following detailed drawings are typically required;

- Site Plan

A site plan identifies buildings and other features in relation to property boundaries. The site plan should identify your existing house and proposed changes with dimensions to property lines, information on all accessory buildings, such as the size and location of garages, swimming pools or tool sheds, and location of easements.

- Floor Plans

A floor plan provides a “bird’s eye view” of the different floors of your house. The floor plan should show layout, dimensions and uses of all rooms and spaces on each floor, and must include the specifics of all structural components for each floor.

- Cross Section

A cross section presents a view of a house along an imaginary cut through one particular location of the building. The cross section should include the construction of floor, roof, exterior and interior walls, and foundation walls, as well as room heights.

- Elevations

Elevations show the exterior view of each side of a building. Each elevation is identified by the direction it is facing and may be required for any project which would alter the exterior view of the your house. Heights and dimensions of existing and new window

and door openings, exterior finishes and materials, finished floor levels and grade, an extent of new construction and existing house should be shown on an elevation plan.

Contact our Department in the planning stages of your project, before any drawings have been started in order to discuss the nature of your project and the extent of the plans that will be required. Please note that Certification by a Professional Engineer is required for certain prefabricated structures or construction components.

Plans must be drawn to scale and be printed in ink or blueprint. Original drawings in pencil are not acceptable, but photocopies of pencilled drawings are fine.

Plans must be fully dimensioned in either metric or imperial units, but not a combination of both and include the following information:

- Title
- Date
- Municipal Address
- Scale
- Dimensions
- Extent of new and existing construction

For examples of construction plans required for additions, garages, and porches, please refer to the following pamphlets, "Additions: A Homeowner's Guide", "Garages: A Homeowner's Guide", or "Porches and Decks: A Homeowner's Guide"; all of which are available at the Building Department service counter.

Fees

Building permit fees are required to be paid in full at the time of application. The current fee schedule can be obtained by contacting our Department prior to making application. Building permit fees can be paid by cash, Interact, or by cheque, payable to the "City of Hamilton". A maximum of \$1000.00 per property can be charged to Visa or MasterCard.

Submitting Your Application

Building permits may be applied for by a property owner, or by an agent acting on behalf of the owner, such as the contractor or designer.

NOTE: It is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure that a building permit is obtained when required.

Your completed application form, construction plans and form of payment should be brought to the Building Department service counter located in the reception area on the third floor of City Hall. Please inform the Customer Service Representative at the service counter of the nature of the project and a Customer Service Representative/Plan Examiner will be asked to come out and review the application and ensure that everything is in order. You will be given a receipt which will have an application code number for your reference (this is not your building permit). The Customer Service Representative/Plan Examiner will oversee the building permit application from the initial application stage through to issuance.

Review of Building Permit Applications

Your building permit application, regardless of its complexity, is processed and checked for compliance with the Hamilton Zoning By-Law, the Ontario Building Code and other by-laws if applicable. This ensures that all approved applications meet the intent of the Zoning By-Law for the particular district the property is located in, and that the construction meets all safety requirements set out in the Ontario Building Code.

Hamilton Zoning By-Law Review

Zoning By-Laws specify the uses permitted in particular areas and contain regulations governing the size, height, and location of

structures. For example, the City's regulations can affect how close to the lot line you can build or how large your building can be. During the planning stage of your project, it is imperative that you determine what zoning requirements apply to your property.

The information you will require from the Zoning By-Law includes:

- Minimum building setbacks (distance from the building to the property line).
- Building height restrictions.
- Total building floor area and lot coverage permitted (if applicable).
- Number of required parking spaces.

You may contact our Customer Service Representatives to determine the specific zoning requirements for your project.

Ontario Building Code Review

In addition to conforming to the Hamilton Zoning By-Law, your project will be reviewed for compliance with the Ontario Building Code.

The Ontario Building Code regulates the use and occupancy of buildings as well as the construction and material requirements for structural and fire safety. The Ontario Building Code also sets standards for heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems as well as plumbing requirements.

Other Approvals

In certain cases, you will require approval from other City departments prior to issuance of a building permit. If your property is located in a designated Heritage Conservation District or has been designated by the City of Hamilton under the Ontario Heritage Act, alterations and construction on the property may only be undertaken with City Council approval.

Agencies outside the City of Hamilton may also have an interest in your project and you may require their approval before a building permit is issued.

You may have to obtain approval from the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority if your property abuts land or watercourses under Conservation jurisdiction. For more information please contact the Planning and Engineering Division of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority in Ancaster at (905) 525-2181.

If your property abuts the Niagara Escarpment, approval from the Niagara Escarpment Commission may be required in order for the City of Hamilton to issue your permit. For more information, please call the Niagara Escarpment Commission at (905) 877-5191.

Prior to installation or alteration of electrical equipment, an Electrical Permit is required from Ontario Hydro. For application requirements, contact the Hamilton Inspection Office at 529-7125.

Review Process

The amount of time required to examine your application will depend on the complexity of your project and the number of applications under review at any one time.

When the review of your application is complete, you will be notified by letter if there are any outstanding requirements or problems.

If you wish to inquire about the status of your application, please call the Customer Service Representative that met with you when you first applied for the application.

What if the Zoning By-Law Requirements are not met?

You may discover upon application for a Building Permit that the requirements of the Hamilton Zoning By-Law place restrictions on your

proposed construction. Due to special circumstances it might be found unsatisfactory for you to alter your plans to meet the requirements of the Zoning By-Law. In this case you may wish to make application to the Committee of Adjustment in order to attempt to receive a minor variance from the Zoning By-Law.

Applications to the Committee of Adjustment can be obtained from the Building Department. Information about the process can be found in the covering pages to the application. Applications are filed through the Building Department and Committee of Adjustment staff or Customer Service counter staff can assist you with the application should you require assistance.

Issuance of the Building Permit

The Building Permit will be mailed to you upon completion of our review of your submission. If you wish to pick up your permit, you must notify the Customer Service Representative.

Once you receive your permit, please read the approved permit documents thoroughly before commencing construction. The construction must be in accordance with the plans and documents issued with your permit. Any deviation from the reviewed drawings must be reported to the Building Inspector.

While work is in progress, you must ensure that the permit and approved plans are available on the construction site.

Several inspections are required during construction to ensure that all work is done in accordance with the approved plans. In general, the following stages of construction require inspection:

- Footings
- Foundation dampproofing/waterproofing
- Framing/structural
- Plumbing
- Heating/ventilation

- Insulation/vapour barrier

Contact the Building Inspector before you start your project to find out what inspections are required.

NOTE: It is your responsibility as the owner to ensure that either you or your contractor contacts the City to request an inspection at least 24 hours before work proceeds from one inspection stage to the next.

For inspections call (905) 546-2782 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

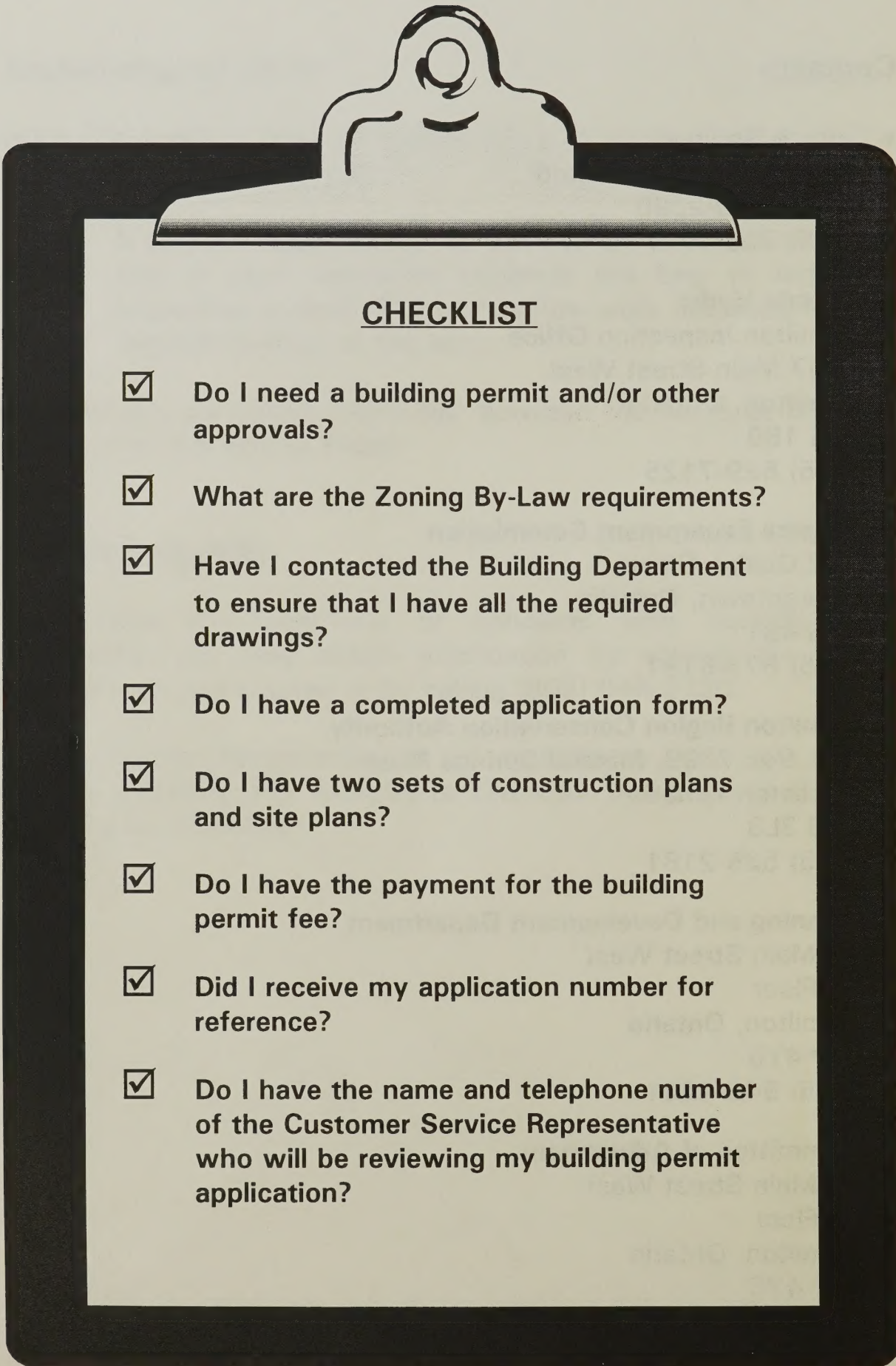
General Information

If you have any questions or concerns with building permit requirements, you may obtain information by visiting the Building Department service counter or by calling (905) 546-2720.

Customer Service Representatives are available to assist you between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday, and between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Friday.

Contacts

- **Locate Service**
Ontario One Call Limited
1-800-400-2255
(905) 709-1717
- **Ontario Hydro**
Hamilton Inspection Office
1057 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8S 1B9
(905) 529-7125
- **Niagara Escarpment Commission**
232 Guelph Street
Georgetown, Ontario
L7G 4B1
(905) 877-5191
- **Hamilton Region Conservation Authority**
P.O. Box 7099, Mineral Springs Road
Ancaster, Ontario
L9G 3L3
(905) 525-2181
- **Planning and Development Department**
71 Main Street West
7th Floor
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5
(905) 546-4221
- **Committee of Adjustment**
71 Main Street West
3rd Floor
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5
(905) 546-2720



CHECKLIST

- ☒ Do I need a building permit and/or other approvals?
- ☒ What are the Zoning By-Law requirements?
- ☒ Have I contacted the Building Department to ensure that I have all the required drawings?
- ☒ Do I have a completed application form?
- ☒ Do I have two sets of construction plans and site plans?
- ☒ Do I have the payment for the building permit fee?
- ☒ Did I receive my application number for reference?
- ☒ Do I have the name and telephone number of the Customer Service Representative who will be reviewing my building permit application?



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Produced by the City of Hamilton Building Department
August 1998